

The economics of the school curriculum

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Propositions

Accompanying the dissertation

The Economics of the School Curriculum

By

Ron Diris

1. Skill accumulation is not an additive process and remediating skill gaps might not be feasible, or highly costly, because those skills developed early in life can be absolutely crucial for the whole process of skill formation.
(Chapter 2)
2. Psychologists and school teachers often argue that children need to reach a certain maturity level before they can effectively learn reading and writing, and therefore advocate relatively late school starting ages. However, from a human capital point of view, delay of investment lowers its value.
(Chapter 3)
3. The true value of instruction time in language lies in spillover effects into other subjects. Extensive and early instruction in language is a foundation for skill development in other subjects.
(Chapter 4)
4. The effects of early tracking on education and earnings become steadily less unfavorable as we move upward in the distribution, but they are only positive for students of the very highest ability level.
(Chapter 6)
5. Students that repeat a grade during formal education perform especially poor on easy questions. They are lacking basic skills.
(Chapter 7)
6. Education costs money, but then so does ignorance. (Claus Moser)
7. Knowledge is perhaps nowhere as complementary as in the world of research. This makes it all the more surprising and wasteful that different research fields work so independently from each other.
8. The learning process of any individual starts with the concepts of speaking and walking. Doing a PhD makes one realize that learning at later stages still involves large quantities of incomprehensible language, and a lot of falling down and getting up again.
9. The first lesson of economics is scarcity: There is never enough of anything to satisfy all those who want it. The first lesson of politics is to disregard the first lesson of economics. (Thomas Sowell)
10. You can practice shooting eight hours a day, but if your technique is wrong, then all you become is very good at shooting the wrong way. Get the fundamentals down and the level of everything you do will rise. (Michael Jordan)